

2002

December 31, 2002

Re: Comments to file for Docket #02-277

To all involved in FCC discussions regarding Media Ownership restrictions:

When I hear that the FCC is even considering loosening its restrictions on media ownership, I feel a tremendous amount of fear and anxiety over the integrity of a value Americans hold more precious than any other – *our freedom!*

Our ability to responsibly and effectively implement democracy *is* only as good as our ability to responsibly and effectively access objective information for use in our decisions. To me, it is nothing less than common sense that tells us preserving access to independent information sources is crucial to this process!

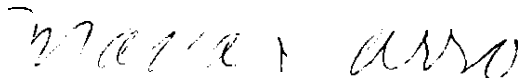
Even if current media conglomerates were beautifully ensuring responsible and unbiased information access, is it not clear that consolidated media ownership will always hold with it a potential for abuse? Isn't it incredibly obvious that more independent media ownership promotes more independent voices and more competitive and financial ability for those voices to reach a market?

Monopolies are objected to in any other competitive markets. Few would argue that media is not a huge factor in shaping our culture and our views. With so much more at stake, is not our media market the single MOST important market to protect against consolidated control?

Arguments stating that the Internet provides more than enough independent voices are simply ludicrous. First of all, many of the conglomerates have a strong Internet presence as well (AOL for example). Secondly, I would say that it's pretty obvious, without looking at a single study, that newspapers and television wield a significantly more powerful sphere of influence.

I believe that we all want to live in a world where all are free – where all choices are made in light of what's good for all of us, not just some of us. Let us examine our hearts and do what we know will support this vision.

With hope and prayers,



Maria Sarro